

Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Crystal Rodriguez and I live in East Hartford, Connecticut. I support Senate Bill No. 1178: *An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Day*.

Paid sick time is important to me because time is money.

During my last pregnancy, I was a high-risk pregnancy and even after delivery, I experienced a lot of complications. I was approved for FMLA however I did still face challenges. First, there were many days leading up to my FMLA that required paid sick time as it had not progressed to the need for long-term care.

Additionally, FMLA took longer than expected which caused me to fall behind on my bills. My car was repossessed with my newborn's car seat and stroller. This also happened while I was hunting for baby formula due to the shortage. I felt lost, hopeless, and helpless. The paid sick time finally came through and I remember crying tears of joy because I was ready to give up. Mothers in Connecticut and pregnant people can't afford to not have access to paid sick days. I cannot imagine how I would have handled things if it weren't for the paid sick time. This is why I am supporting a paid sick law that gives me 80 hours of paid sick leave, access to paid sick time right away, faster accrual, and expansion of who we call family so that my best friend who cares for me frequently doesn't miss pay, access regardless of employer size, and protection when there is a health emergency.

I strongly support the expansion of paid sick days in our state as outlined in this bill. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote favorably this year to strengthen Connecticut's paid sick leave law.

Thank you for your time,
Crystal Rodriguez East Hartford, CT